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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

29 September 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Major General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., USA  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : The Pressure Package

Per your request and Dr. Kissinger's, attached is a rough first cut at a way in which the pressure package might perhaps best be put together. What appears here is the framework and background against which the catalogue of specific proposals -- yours, the JCS', ours and anyone else's -- needs to be set and related. We are developing and will forward early next week specific suggestions on psychological and covert action operations against the North, political steps that could enhance the strength and image of the GVN, and some further specific suggestions on targetting and military action. Obviously our inputs will need to be meshed and melded with those you receive from other quarters. Section V, in short, needs to be put together after Sections I-IV (or their revised replacements) get jelled.

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George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

- ✓ 1 - Haig Special Request File (GAC) w/att  
1 - GAC Chrono wo/att  
1 - VAS Chrono wo/att

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF E. O. 11652, EXEMPTION CATEGORY: § 55(1), (2), (3) or (4) (circle one or more) AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Impossible to Determine (unless impossible, insert date or event)
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ROUGH OUTLINE/DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Project (X)

## I. ASSUMPTIONS

1. The action package outlined below for your consideration was based on four working assumptions, which were taken as planning "givens" and are not offered as predictions:

(1) That you are re-elected on 7 November.

(2) That there is no major change in the North Vietnamese negotiating position between now and 7 November.

(3) That even if there should be a sharp flurry of Communist military activity during October, ARVN suffers no major defeats and as of 7 November there is no imminent prospect of any kind of cease fire.

(4) There is no change in North Vietnam's position with respect to negotiating a release of U.S. prisoners.

## II. OBJECTIVES

2. On your instructions, we have attempted to devise an action package which -- if the actual 8 November situation resembles that posited by the above four assumptions -- could be promptly initiated to maximize the chances of achieving the following two objectives:

(1) Induce the Lao Dong Politburo to abandon its current policy of armed struggle.

(2) Compel Hanoi to negotiate a return of all U.S. prisoners -- military and civilian -- and, in good faith, help account for all U.S. personnel (again, military and

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civilian) currently carried on our records as "Missing in Action."

3. Comment. The phrasing of objective (1) is deliberate. Ideally, we would like to achieve a negotiated settlement of the Indochina war. As a matter of prudence, not prediction, it should be recognized that such a negotiated settlement -- committing Hanoi publicly to terms and arrangements acceptable to the U.S. and South Vietnamese governments -- may be impossible to achieve in the sense that even if Hanoi's behavior should change to a degree that meets our -- and Saigon's -- minimal requirements, this or any other Lao Dong Politburo may find it politically impossible to sign a document that in North Vietnamese eyes would perforce be read as a public acknowledgement of defeat. The Lao Dong Party will of course never abandon its goal of acquiring political control over all of Vietnam (North and South), plus de facto suzerainty over Laos and Cambodia. It may nonetheless be possible to structure a situation which will induce the Party to abandon for a significant period of time (measured in years) its current policy of pursuing that goal through a strategy involving extensive reliance on armed force. In short, the best feasible solution in Indochina may prove to be one that in many respects resembles an untidy, non-formalized version of the 1953 Korea pattern much more than that of the 1954 Geneva settlement.

4. If Hanoi goes the route of negotiated settlement, or even negotiated cease fire pending final settlement, objective (2)'s achievement will be subsumed in the achievement of objective (1), since the U.S. would presumably not accept any settlement or cease fire package of which prisoner return and MIA accountings were not component parts. On the other hand, should objective (1) be attained by Hanoi's going the "behavioral" route without formally accepting a cease fire or settlement package, achieving objective (2) will become a much more complex and difficult proposition.

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5. Any leadership group demonstrably willing to take or spend lives by the thousands or even tens of thousands for doctrinal reasons or in an attempt to gain transient military or political advantage simply does not comprehend, let alone share, the political and moral value scale that shapes the U.S. position on the prisoner question. For reasons of political convenience, Hanoi's leaders refuse to acknowledge the existence of NVA prisoners in allied hands and clearly consider any proposals for their return a source of acute embarrassment. The extent to which concern for our prisoners (numbering only in the hundreds) constitutes a major determinant of U.S. policy must strike Hanoi as a rather extreme example of baffling occidental inscrutability. Our obvious if mystifying concern, however, is clearly regarded by Hanoi as one of its biggest hole cards, through whose well timed play face can perhaps be saved or an otherwise lost hand recouped. In any event, to Hanoi our manifest concern makes the U.S. prisoners a windfall asset not to be squandered lightly. Thus should objective (1) be achieved by the "behavioral" rather than the "negotiated" route, its very achievement could complicate rather than facilitate the achievement of objective (2). Our action proposal package, therefore, has had to try to take account of this complexity by endeavoring to structure a situation where, if the behavioral route is followed, the prisoners become a costly liability to Hanoi rather than an asset.

### III. PRESSURE POINTS

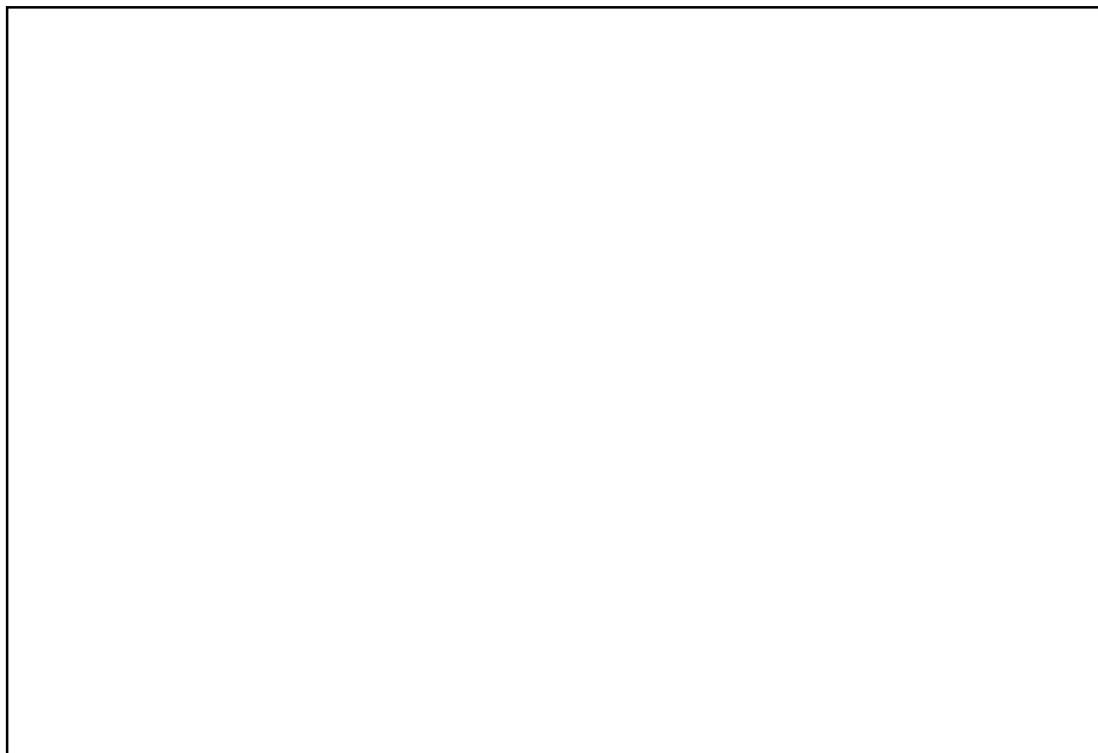
6. Achievement of either or both of the above objectives involves inducing the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party to adopt certain courses of action

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or lines of policy. This, in turn, involves either (a) persuading a preponderant portion\* of the current Politburo to change the Lao Dong's current policies or (b) inducing a change in the Politburo's composition sufficient to produce the required change in Party policies. The whole point of our action program, in short, is to affect attitudes and outlook -- not to inflict any given range, type or level of physical damage but to shape the opinions, perceptions and resultant behavior of a finite, identifiable group of human beings who constitute the Politburo's membership. This means, in turn, that our action mix should be specifically structured to focus on key pressure points -- topics, issues, or situations likely to have the greatest impact on Politburo thinking. We believe there are four such pressure points, which we have labelled policy, priorities, cohesion and expectations.

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A. Policy



\*This is a rather turgid phrase, but a "preponderant portion" of the Politburo might, or might not, constitute a numerical majority.

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[redacted]

8. [redacted] The Communists initiated

(or, more accurately, resumed) the policy of armed struggle in the late 1950s for one basic reason: to prevent the evolution of a viable non-Communist state in South Vietnam. The essentially political struggle strategy of the post-Geneva era was simply not working. By all canons of logic or analysis, the Party's superior cohesion and organization, backed by judicious use of terrorist pressure, should have made the Party a swift, inevitable victor in any contest with the French-tainted shell of a non-government Diem was given charge of by and soon wrested from Bao Dai. But as so often happens in Indochina, events confounded logic. By 1957 it was becoming painfully and unavoidably clear to Hanoi that political struggle would not work and any hope of preventing the evolution of a non-Communist state in the south would have to involve a resort to arms. This argument carried the day at the Politburo table in early 1957, soon after Le Duan left his twelve year tenure as director of the Party's southern apparatus, rejoined his Politburo colleagues at the meeting table in Hanoi and took over Truong Chinh's former responsibilities as Party First Secretary.

9. From Hanoi's perspective, the worst possible outcome of the Indochina struggle would be a U.S. disengagement which left a non-Communist state in the south capable of indefinitely resisting aggressive pressures from the Communist North, with support from the U.S. no different in essential kind or degree from that which Hanoi demonstrably receives from China and the Soviet Union (thus erasing the propaganda utility of the "neo-colonialist puppet" charge). To the Hanoi Politburo, this would be a graphic description of defeat.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

10. The strongest possible inducement to change a given policy, particularly one pursued at horrendous cost involving the sacrifice of other desired objectives -- and the strongest possible inducement to call to account that policy's architect and principal advocate -- is undeniable, unignorable evidence that the policy is failing. Successful "Vietnamization" entails precisely the kind of politico-military developments in the south that Hanoi's armed struggle policy was specifically designed and adopted to prevent. [REDACTED]

It is also why all signs of Vietnamization progress -- and any signs of increase in its range, depth or scope -- put particularly severe and acute pressure on the Lao Dong Politburo in Hanoi.

Operational Corollaries. Maximizing this area of pressure entails putting in our action mix specific steps designed to facilitate the following. (This list is not offered in any utopian sense. Achievement of these tasks is clearly a desirable optimum, but the key fact here is that any perceptible movement in the direction of achievement will of itself help generate the kind of pressures we are trying to create -- though, obviously, the greater or faster the movement, the greater the pressure.)

a. Visible and accelerated disengagement of direct U.S. participation in Indochina combat, keyed to a goal of reducing U.S. support for South Vietnam to a type and level roughly comparable to the support Hanoi receives from Moscow and Peking.

b. (The obverse of a.) Equipping, training and supporting the South Vietnamese in a manner that enables them to match Hanoi's military capabilities in all major areas (e.g., air power and air defense).

c. The expansion and consolidation of the GVN's administrative control over -- in priority order -- South Vietnam's (1) population and (2) territory.

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d. Continued, and visible, improvement in the cohesion of South Vietnam's state structure, the legitimacy of its government's mandate, and the latter's efficient responsiveness to the aspiration and needs of its people.\*

e. To the extent feasible, preventing and/or changing GVN actions which damage its domestic and international image as an effective, legitimate and responsive government.\*

B. Priorities

12. For years there has lain under the Politburo table a time bomb whose fuse it is clearly in our interest to shorten. [ ] the policy issue on which the Politburo's sensitivity makes it most vulnerable. With equal accuracy, and inadvertence, this bomb has been succinctly described by the editorial writer of Hanoi's Army newspaper, Quan Doi Nhan Dan:  
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"Our entire party and all our people and armed forces are bringing into full play their determination to implement President Ho's testament, to persevere in and advance the anti-U.S. national salvation resistance to total victory, and, at the same time, to intensively and successfully build socialism. The task of fighting the Americans and the task of building socialism in the north are the two strategic tasks that are closely interrelated and that must be simultaneously carried out."\*\*

\*Our concrete action suggestions in these areas, outlined below, eschew utopian prescriptions and attempt to take full cognizance of the realities and givens of South Vietnamese political life -- including Thieu's temperament, outlook and personality.

\*\*24 June 1971 commentary "A Basic Task and a Noble Duty," 24 June 1971. Text given on page K19 of FBIS IV, 28 June 1971. Emphasis added.

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13. The Politburo has set itself, and the Party, two basic objectives: (1) building a socialist (i.e., Communist) state in North Vietnam and (2) pursuing the southern struggle (i.e., acquiring Party control over the south). As the editorial writer indicates, the official line is that these two objectives are to be pursued "simultaneously." The question never asked is what choice is made if events should create a situation in which these two tasks clearly cannot be simultaneously pursued, if in fact one clearly must be subordinated to the other for an indeterminate period of time. This question of basic priority is never asked because it raises an issue no one on the Politburo wants to face head on, since facing it surfaces a divisive issue that could shatter the Politburo's collective unity. The divisive potential of this issue is rendered especially acute by two further factors: (1) within the Politburo there has long been a latent polarization between the "North Vietnam firsters" and the "southern struggle firsters," (2) the former coalesce around Truong Chinh; the latter, around Le Duan.

14. The fuse on this priorities issue was inevitably ignited by Ho Chi Minh's death in September 1969. Until his dying day, Ho was the unchallenged (and unchallengeable) head of the Party, the umpire whose rulings no Politburo, or Party, member would seriously consider questioning. His very presence, hence, guaranteed that all disputes, no matter how potentially divisive, could be kept within bounds and prevented from posing serious threats to Party unity. But the umpire has now been dead for three years. His chair still sits empty at the head of the table; his still vacant post of Party Chairman has not yet been filled. There is clearly now no such umpire. If there were, he would be named Chairman and sitting where Ho once sat. The Party, in short, is a regency -- the king is three years dead, but no heir has yet been chosen, let alone crowned. Regencies, including Communist ones, are inherently unstable; committee-headed regencies particularly so.

15. Where the Lao Dong Politburo is concerned, there are several other apples of potential discord that any basic priority debate would spill right out

on the table. If Le Duan were not now occupying the First Secretary's chair, Truong Chinh would probably now be sitting in the Chairman's empty seat. Until 1956, Truong Chinh was the First Secretary, Ho's principal lieutenant and virtually appointed heir. Truong Chinh lost that post and its accompanying primacy because of the disastrous consequences of the "Land Reform" program, of which he was the principal architect and executor and which, by 1956, clearly had to be abandoned. When the "Land Reform" policy was shelved, Truong Chinh lost his job (though through Ho's patronage he kept his Politburo membership).

"Land Reform" was a northern consolidation and control program, never seriously essayed in the south (where, in that era, the Party had nothing like the extensive, often contiguous areas of territorial control that it had in the north). The man who supplanted Truong Chinh, at least as First Secretary, was Le Duan -- brought north from a twelve year stint spent in directing (or helping direct) Party operations in the south. Soon after he moved into Truong Chinh's chair, Le Duan successfully advocated -- and has since directed -- the policy of pursuing southern ambitions through armed struggle. No one on the Politburo or, for that matter, in the Party -- least of all Truong Chinh (and Le Duan) -- can possibly be blind to the fact that Le Duan is every bit as much the architect and executor of the current southern struggle policy as Truong Chinh was of "Land Reform." Nor can anyone in the Politburo or Party possibly miss the potential implications of this fact should the armed struggle policy's failures produce an impasse in any way comparable to the 1956 situation created by the disastrous consequences of "Land Reform."

16. Operational Corollaries. The above factors and bits of Party history all combine to make the priorities issue a highly sensitive pressure point. We hence want to force the Politburo to focus squarely on this issue and in a way

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that patently favors the argument of the "North Vietnam firsters." To do this, our action mix should include components that:

a. Level and/or keep out of commission everything the Hanoi regime inherited from the French or, particularly, has built since 1956. This is not -- repeat not -- an argument for or advocacy of indiscriminate attacks against population centers or civilian targets such as schools, hospitals, apartment buildings, etc. Indeed, this point is feasible to advance because -- and only because -- improvements in weaponry and delivery techniques permit some genuine degree of surgical precision. As explained in more detail below, we are talking here about ports, rail lines, highways, power plants, radio transmitters, major factories, and the like.

b. Make perceptible progress -- preferably with an attendant aura of inexorability -- toward a clear cut division of labor: the defense of South Vietnam is a GVN account; the attack on the north, a U.S. account. This clearly dovetails with the operational recommendation of paragraph 11 above. Again, however, it is stressed that we are not expecting to achieve this situation in any month-measured time frame. What we want is an action mix that will make it crystal clear that this is the direction in which allied (U.S. and GVN) policies are moving.

c. Through the proper, emphatic execution of a and b, convey the very clear message that there is not going to be socialist or any other reconstruction in North

Vietnam until the policy of armed struggle is abandoned  
and satisfactory accommodation reached with the U.S.  
on the matter of our prisoners.

C. Cohesion

17. Since its founding by Ho in 1930, the Vietnamese Communist Party's greatest source of strength -- its greatest asset -- has been its unity, cohesion and concomitant organizational discipline. We therefore need to mount a focused attack on that cohesion at several levels. This involves a set of explicit activities or operations (outlined below) expressly designed to:

a. Sow and/or fan rivalry, distrust and discord within the Politburo itself and, if possible, precipitate the priorities debate described above.

b. Sow and fan doubts within the Party cadre about the leadership's unity and the wisdom, cost and probable outcome of its current policies.

c. Actively foment discord within the North Vietnamese population in an effort to create a climate of unrest over a burden increasingly perceived to be intolerable and of at least passive resistance -- in short, a climate roughly analogous, at least in impact, to that which forced the Party to abandon its "Land Reform" policy in 1956.

D. Expectations

18. Our total action mix also needs to address the pressure point of expectations -- affecting the Lao Dong Politburo's members' perception of the probable course of future events in three key areas.

19. First -- probably the necessary, even though not the sufficient condition of a change in Lao Dong policy -- we need to convince a preponderant

portion of the Politburo that continuation of the armed struggle policy is most likely to produce in South Vietnam a continuation and reinforcement of the broad trend events have followed since 1965 -- i.e., a progressive strengthening of the cohesion, capabilities and control of the GVN. This trend has often been obscured by the noise and confusion of Communist offensives, most notably in 1968-1969 and again in 1972. To date, however, this trend -- at least in broad outline -- has never really been reversed. Despite Tet 1968, Easter 1972 and their respective aftermaths, the fact remains that at this writing, the Thieu government in the fall of 1972 is far stronger in every respect than was the Ky government in the spring of 1965. More to the point, there is an even more dramatic (and favorable) contrast between Thieu's GVN in 1972 and Diem's in 1957 when the armed struggle policy was first initiated, or even Diem's of 1959 when the full fledged "liberation war" was launched. Our action mix must be designed to convince the Politburo that this is the trend line events in South Vietnam will probably follow if the armed struggle policy is not abandoned.

20. Second, we need to try to prevent the Politburo from ducking its central problems and boosting Party morale by obtaining eye catching, attention diverting successes in Cambodia and Laos. This means doing what we can to keep the Cambodian government's situation from getting perceptibly worse. It also means devoting enough U.S. resources, including air power, to enable friendly forces in Laos at least to keep the Communists from making significant new gains there.

21. Third, we need to change Hanoi's perception of the U.S. position, or reinforce any changes that may now be in train. Ever since the era of heavy, direct U.S. involvement in the Indochina struggle began under President Kennedy, the advancement of U.S. objectives has been bedeviled by one simple fact: in an age of almost instantaneous mass communications it is impossible to convey one message to a domestic audience and a different message to a foreign adversary. Domestically, successive U.S. administrations have stressed

their desire to terminate the struggle (or at least U.S. involvement therein) as quickly as possible. Such themes have of course been read loudly, clearly and immediately in Hanoi, where they have simply reinforced the Politburo's penchant to draw on its experience with the French in believing that it had far greater staying power than the, or any, U.S. Government. One of the many paradoxes of this whole complex struggle is that one of the best ways to effect a reasonably early change in Hanoi's policy is to project an image of willingness to stay the course for whatever length of time proves necessary -- i.e., an image of implacable determination equal to Hanoi's, backed by infinitely greater resources.

22. Given the past four years' changes in the nature of the Indochina struggle -- or at least the way in which it is being waged -- it may now be possible to project such an image within the focus and framework of the action program here outlined. As suggested above, this would involve splitting the issues: acting in a way that conveys the clear message that the U.S. is disengaging from the fighting in South Vietnam as quickly as possible (by strengthening the GVN in ways that make a U.S. presence redundant), but that the U.S. is prepared to concentrate on North Vietnam (in the ways above indicated) until the armed struggle policy is abandoned and our prisoners released. If the first of the four assumptions on which this paper is based proves valid, that fact alone should lend considerable credibility to this line of approach.

#### IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIX

23. In this memorandum's final section we describe the series of specific action suggestions being offered for your consideration and approval (some of these are further amplified in this paper's accompanying annexes). These specific suggestions include actions to be executed by air, land and sea forces, psychological operations and covert action, overt political action and diplomacy.

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It should be recognized, however, that no single set of specific actions -- particularly military actions -- can of itself be decisive. The realities of the current situation, augmented by the record of the past decade, give little grounds for thinking any action mix can render Hanoi physically incapable of sustaining its present policies for an appreciable length of time. We have therefore not even attempted to pursue this "simple solution" chimera. Instead we offer a package which in its interacting totality should generate new pressures and intensify existing pressures on the critical points described above with the specific purpose of influencing the attitudes -- hence decisions and behavior -- of the members of the Lao Dong Politburo in ways that can produce the achievement of this program's two basic objectives.

V. SPECIFIC PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

(TO FOLLOW)